



REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 36, 38-42, 44-48 and 63-65 remain in this application. Claims 16-20, 22-23, 26-28, 31-34, 37, 43, 49-60 and 66-68 have been canceled. Claims 1-15, 21, 24-25, 29-30, 35, and 61-62 have been withdrawn as a result of an earlier restriction requirement. In view of the Examiner's earlier restriction requirement, Applicants retain the right to present claims 1-15, 21, 24-25, 29-30, 35, and 61-62 in a divisional application.

Applicants thank the Examiner for allowance of claims 36, 38-41, 44-48, 63 and 65 as indicated in the Examiner's final Disposition of Claims. However, Applicants point out that claim 64, which depends from allowed claim 63, and claim 31, which depends from claim 26 have not been disposed of in the Disposition of Claims other than to state that they are still pending. Further, the Examiner lists claim 32 as being rejected although claim 32 had been previously canceled. The Disposition of Claims is in conflict with the Examiner's Detailed Action. Applicants contend that claim 64 should be allowed and that claim 31 should stand or fall with rejected claim 26 and respectfully request clarification from the Examiner.

Claims 26-28, 31 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Aktins 5157747 in view of Hicks 4822136.

Applicants have canceled claims 26-28 and claim 31, without prejudice.

Claims 42-43 are rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Applicants have canceled claim 43 to eliminate the redundancy pointed out by the Examiner. Applicants assert that the rejection is overcome and that claim 42 is allowable.

Based upon the above amendments, remarks, and papers of record, applicants believe pending claims 36, 38-42, 44-48 and 63-65 of the above-captioned application are in allowable form and patentable over the prior art of record, and that the amendments above place the claims in better condition for appeal. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter the amendments and that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

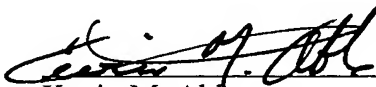
Appl. No.: 10/021,366
Reply to Office Action of: 02/24/2004

Applicants believe that no extension of time is necessary to make this Reply timely. Should Applicants be in error, Applicants respectfully requests that the Office grant such time extension pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) as necessary to make this Reply timely, and hereby authorizes the Office to charge any necessary fee or surcharge with respect to said time extension to the deposit account of the undersigned firm of attorneys, Deposit Account 03-3325.

Please direct any questions or comments to Kevin M. Able at 607-974-2637.

Respectfully submitted,

DATE: 4/23/04


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